

What is claimed is:

1. A method for initiating delivery of a digital rights management (DRM) encoded content item over a digital network between a client and a target server, said method comprising the steps of:

said client identifying a link to said target server for accessing said DRM encoded content item;

said client initiating a network session with said target server;

said client sending an offer message to said target server containing a list of at least one supported DRM method;

said target server sending an answer message to said client containing a corresponding list 1) indicating whether each DRM method listed in said offer message is supported by said target server, and 2) providing a network address of a DRM license server for each supported DRM method;

said client selecting a supported DRM method;

said client obtaining a DRM license using said network address listed for said selected DRM method; and

said target server delivering said DRM encoded content item to said client using said selected DRM method.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein each said network address comprises a respective IP address and a respective port number for a respective DRM license server.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said answer message further includes a network transport method for each said supported DRM method.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said answer message comprises a zero value for each DRM method not supported by said target server.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said offer message lists a plurality of DRM methods in order of preferred acceptance.

5 6. The method of claim 5 wherein said selected DRM method is comprised of a DRM method supported by said target server that is listed earliest in said order of said offer message.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said offer message and said answer
10 message are exchanged using a session description protocol.

8. A method for serving digital rights management (DRM) encoded content item from a target server to a digital network in accordance with a plurality of DRM methods, said target server including a plurality of ports wherein each port serves said
15 DRM encoded content item using a respective DRM method, said method comprising the steps of:

establishing a link on said target server for accessing said DRM encoded content item;

establishing a network session between said target server and a client
20 accessing said link;

said target server receiving an offer message from said client containing a list of at least one supported DRM method;

said target server sending an answer message to said client containing a corresponding list 1) indicating whether each DRM method listed in said offer
25 message is supported by said target server, 2) providing a network address of a DRM license server for each supported DRM method, and 3) indicating a port of said target server for accessing each supported DRM method; and

said target server receiving a request message from said client and delivering said DRM encoded content item to said client using said DRM method corresponding to a port identified in said request message.

5 9. The method of claim 8 wherein said offer message and said answer message further indicate supported transport methods for delivering said DRM encoded content item.

10 10. The method of claim 8 wherein said answer message contains an explicit response to each DRM method listed in said offer message.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said explicit response corresponding to a DRM method not supported by said target server is comprised of a zero value.

15 12. The method of claim 8 wherein said offer message and said answer message are exchanged using a session description protocol.

13. Software for distribution of digital rights management (DRM) encoded content items over a digital network between a client and a target server, said software embodied on a computer readable medium and, when executed by said client, operable to perform the steps comprising:

selecting a link to said target server for accessing a desired DRM encoded content item;

initiating a network session with said target server;

25 sending an offer message to said target server containing a list of at least one supported DRM method;

receiving an answer message from said target server containing a corresponding list 1) indicating whether each DRM method listed in said offer

message is supported by said target server, and 2) providing a network address of a DRM license server for each supported DRM method;

selecting a supported DRM method;

obtaining a DRM license using said network address listed for said selected
5 DRM method; and

retrieving said DRM encoded content item from said target server using said
selected DRM method.

14. The software of claim 13 operable to list a plurality of DRM methods in
10 said offer message in order of preferred acceptance.

15. The software of claim 14 operable to select a DRM method supported
by said target server that is listed earliest in said order of said offer message.

16. The software of claim 13 wherein said offer message and said answer
15 message are exchanged using a session description protocol.

17. Software for distribution of digital rights management (DRM) encoded
content items over a digital network between clients and a target server in accordance
20 with a plurality of DRM methods, said target server including a plurality of ports
wherein each port serves said DRM encoded content item using a respective DRM
method, said software embodied on a computer readable medium and, when executed
by said target server, operable to perform the steps comprising:

establishing a link on said target server for accessing said DRM encoded
25 content item;

establishing a network session between said target server and a client
accessing said link;

receiving an offer message from said client containing a list of at least one
supported DRM method;

5 sending an answer message to said client containing a corresponding list 1)
indicating whether each DRM method listed in said offer message is supported by said
target server, 2) providing a network address of a DRM license server for each
supported DRM method, and 3) indicating a port of said target server for accessing
each supported DRM method; and

receiving a request message from said client and delivering said DRM
encoded content item to said client using said DRM method corresponding to a port
identified in said request message.

10 18. The software of claim 17 further operable to indicate supported
transport methods for delivering said DRM encoded content item.

19. The software of claim 17 further operable to provide an explicit
response to each DRM method listed in said offer message.

15 20. The software of claim 19 wherein said explicit response corresponding
to a DRM method not supported by said target server is comprised of a zero value.

20 21. The software of claim 8 wherein said offer message and said answer
message are exchanged using a session description protocol.